

Unit 4: Using Child Assessment Information to Guide Instruction

Unit 4

How will I know that I am successful?	
What is my timeframe for working on this skill?	
What do I need? (e.g. resources, kinds of support, literature)	
Mentor-Coaching Skill to Strengthen	

Mentor-Coaching Skills

**Setting Achievable Goals** – ELMCs assist protégés in identifying, refining and setting realistic goals. In content-focused mentor-coaching, the goals relate to the child outcomes being sought.

**Professional Development Planning** – ELMCs and protégés, through reflection and dialogue, document their progress and identify professional pursuits. As milestones are achieved, new ones often emerge.

**Relationship Building** – Readiness to form and maintain a trusting, supportive relationship with another person is essential to mentor-coaching. Building and maintaining relationships requires careful attention, patience and persistence.

**Sharing Values** – Sharing values means that a person is willing to share beliefs, principles or ideals with another. In the ongoing processes of sharing values, ELMCs and protégés come to know one another better. In so doing, they are more fully prepared to meet the diverse needs of the children and families with whom they work.

**Culturally Sensitive Approaches** – Mentor-Coaches and protégés often come from different cultural backgrounds. When ELMCs and protégés recognize that values and practices vary across cultures, they can better demonstrate cultural sensitivity not only with each other, but with children, staff and parents in their program.

**Self-Reflection** – Reflecting on one’s own practices, knowledge and beliefs, enables a person to be more self-aware. Self-awareness leads to making changes in one’s behavior or viewpoint.

**Communication, Listening and Reflective Inquiry** – Mentor-coaching relationships are based on effective communication. They involve building trust and confidentiality, careful listening, and asking questions to achieve clarity. In two-way conferences with protégés, ELMCs often engage in reflective inquiry (asking questions) to elicit thoughtful answers.

**Problem Solving** – When a problem arises, ELMCs actively assist the protégés in finding solutions to the problem. They help protégés to define the problem, examine options and select strategies to remedy the situation.

**Observation and Use of Observation Tools** – Observation is a central activity in mentor-coaching relationships. Most commonly, the ELMC schedules a visit and observes protégés at work. Ideally, there is a Pre-Observation Conference and then the observation takes place, followed by a Post-Observation Conference.

**Reflective Conferencing** – Reflective conferencing is an interactive process through which ELMCs support protégés to examine and enhance their own teaching practices. In reflective conferences, ELMCs help lead protégés in analyses of observed events, address any challenges and discuss next steps.

**Journaling** – ELMCs and protégés use journals to write their thoughts about professional practices, interactions, new ideas, plans and observations. Journals help staff to think about and track their own growth and development.

**Providing and Receiving Feedback** – Honesty, encouragement and respect are guiding principles to demonstrate when providing feedback to a protégé. Receiving feedback is about moving forward or being “proactive,” not about making mistakes and going backward.

**Child Assessment** – Successful ongoing assessment uses both child performance and staff observation methods to gain a full picture of the child’s language abilities and emergent literacy learning. Ongoing assessment draws Head Start staff and parents or guardians together around children’s progress and the program’s policies as a whole.

**Individualizing Instruction** – Individualizing instruction requires staff to observe each child’s interests, temperament, language, cultural background and learning style. Individualizing instruction is the foundation of a quality early childhood program and ensures the participation of all children.

STEP-Line: 1-877-COACH 04  
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STEP-Net: <http://www.step-net.org>



Professional Development Plan

The *Steps to Success* Professional Development Plan supports the growth of Early Literacy Mentor-Coaches throughout the Instructional Design and beyond. It focuses on strengthening, acquiring and refining your mentor-coaching skills. At the end of modules 2, 3, and 4 of each unit in the *Steps to Success* Manual, questions for reflection on mentor-coaching skills are posed. Use the plan regularly to chart your professional growth and aspirations.

Steps to Success

Unit 1

Unit 1: Building Relationships to Promote Child Literacy Outcomes

Mentor-Coaching Skill to Strengthen	What do I need? (e.g. resources, kinds of support, literature)	What is my timeframe for working on this skill?	How will I know that I am successful?

Unit 2

Unit 2: Observation of Staff and Analysis

Mentor-Coaching Skill to Strengthen	What do I need? (e.g. resources, kinds of support, literature)	What is my timeframe for working on this skill?	How will I know that I am successful?

Unit 3

Unit 3: Reflective Practice

Mentor-Coaching Skill to Strengthen	What do I need? (e.g. resources, kinds of support, literature)	What is my timeframe for working on this skill?	How will I know that I am successful?